

January 7, 1955

Dr. Dale Jenkins
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Dear Dale:

I was just going to write you about the recent discovery that one out of 75 O. moubata females whose offspring were sent to you, proved to be infected with an unknown strain of relapsing fever when Dr. Philip brought me your letter of December 28.

Borrelia duttonii is, as you know, transmitted transovarially to about 50 per cent of the progeny of O. moubata; it is therefore quite certain that some of the ticks you received are carriers of spirochetes.

I tested those 75 O. moubata females repeatedly (haemolymph-coxalfluid-and feeding tests) before I considered them as clean and safe for rearing purposes.

During my European trip last summer personnel changes took place in that Mr. Hicks had been replaced by Mr. D. Darrow. Upon my return to Hamilton, Mr. Darrow informed me that, a few weeks after he started his work here, he became sick suffering from severe headaches, high fever, and chills. Treated with antibiotics he soon recovered; the nature of his illness could not be determined by serological tests.

It was not until a few days ago when Mr. Darrow told me that he was bitten by three O. moubata nymphs shortly after he started his work here.

This information and the description of Darrow's illness made me suspicious and forced me to spend hours retesting our rearing stock. As I mentioned above, one female harbored spirochetes.

Even though only a few of the 10,000 O. moubata you received are carriers of spirochetes, I have to suggest that those ticks should not be used for rearing purposes or for xenodiagnosis tests. If you can't use them for any other experimental work, please send them back. We shall rear them up to the adult stage and shall test them for spirochetes.